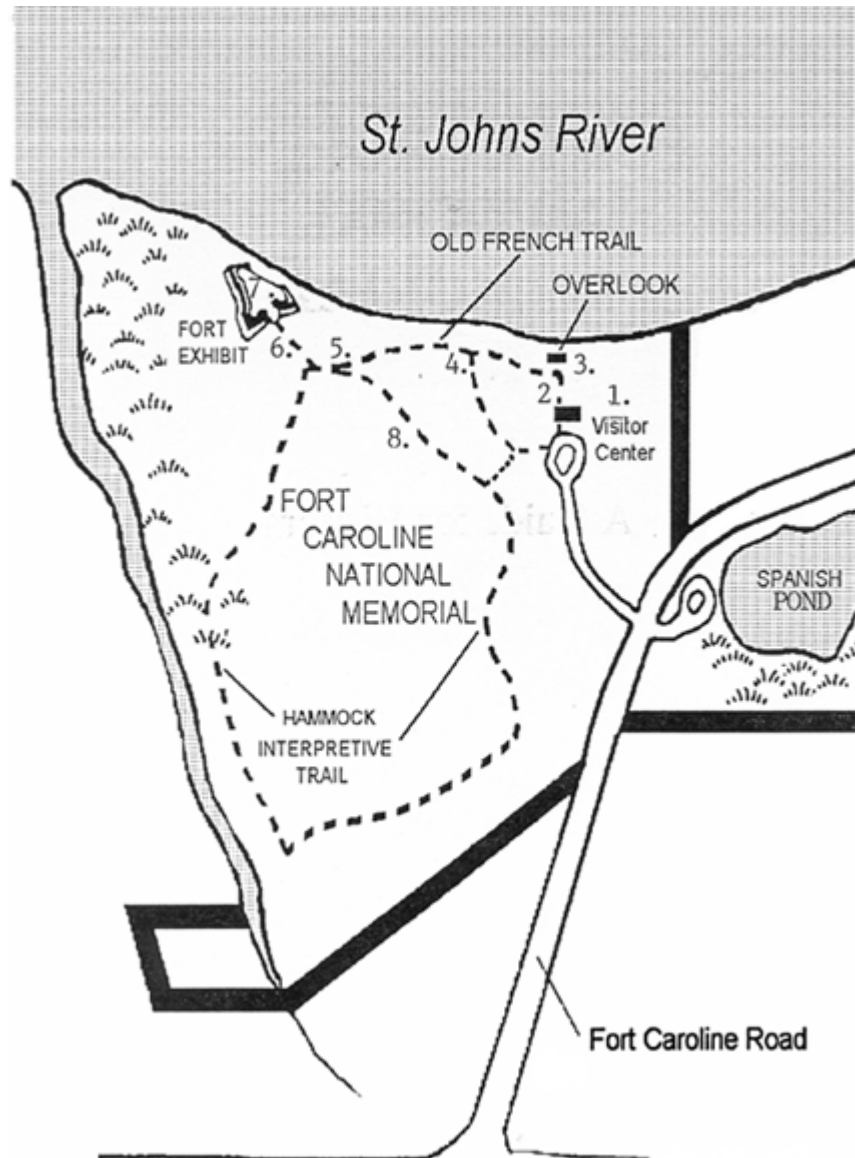


# **VISITOR GUIDE**

## **FORT CAROLINE NATIONAL MEMORIAL**

**Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve**

National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior



The Hammock Trail is 1.0 mile in length and takes about 40 minutes to hike. Hikers have the opportunity to experience and discover the natural communities known to the Timucua and the French.

# **Fort Caroline National Memorial**

## **Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve**

The course of this region's history was changed forever by the interactions between the Timucua, French, and Spanish. Throughout history, including the present, people of many cultural and ethnic backgrounds interacted with the natural resources of this area.

One of the goals of the Timucuan Preserve is to provide visitors with opportunities for personal, intellectual, and emotional connections with the past. It is our hope that your understanding of the natural resources of the area and the importance of the French colony of *la Caroline*, as the first European attempt at colonization in northeast Florida, will broaden your perspective and appreciation of the site.

How we have interacted with our environment and with each other in the past continues to impact our daily lives. Understanding this connection is an important aspect of your visit within the Timucuan Preserve. After your experiences at Fort Caroline National Memorial, you will be better able to understand Fort Caroline's role in the history of Florida and how those events affected people in the past while continuing to influence our lives today.

*The story of Fort Caroline and the Timucuan Preserve is told through a variety of indoor and outdoor exhibits, audiovisual programs, publications, and personal contact with park staff. Combined use of these educational resources is essential to your group's understanding of the site's importance.*

### **Tips for Groups!**

- Reservations are recommended; the size of our facility is limited.
- Stay on the trails!
- Only 30 people can tour the Visitor Center at one time.
- Leaders are responsible for group behavior, it is expected that there is at least one adult for every ten students.
- Wear comfortable shoes and clothing appropriate for the weather.
- Be prepared for biting insects.
- If you plan to eat lunch at the park, trash bags are available in the visitor center
- If you have any special needs, please contact the park at 641-7155.

**It is a park goal to provide a quality educational experience for all visitors.**

**Meeting this goal requires the cooperation of every visiting group!**

# History of Fort Caroline

## KEY TERMS

**Huguenot-** Protestants in France who were being persecuted for their religious beliefs

**River of May-** located by the French on May 1, 1562 and now known as the St. Johns River

**Gulf Stream-** one of Ponce de Leon's most important discoveries, this current made passage from the Americas back to Europe much easier

**Culture shock-** a condition of confusion and anxiety that can affect an individual when suddenly exposed to an entirely new culture or way of life

**Massacre-** the act of killing a number of human beings indiscriminately and cruelly

## KEY PEOPLE

**Jean Ribault-** leader of the French expedition to explore southeastern North America; arrived at the River of May in 1562

**Rene de Laudonniere-** Ribault's second in command in 1562, he led 300 French Huguenot colonists back to Florida to settle in 1564 and built the fort

**Pedro Menendez de Aviles-** sent by Spain to remove the French trespassers from Florida, which Spain had earlier claimed

**Jacques Le Moyne-** French artist who accompanied the 1564 expedition and sketched the animals, plants, people, and events he encountered here. Le Moyne escaped the Spanish attack and returned to France, where he drew from memory the scenes of Florida that were lost during the battle.

**Saturiwa-** local Timucua chief who offered friendship to the French and provided help with building the fort and supplying food

## **HISTORY OF LA CAROLINE** *(key terms and people shown in bold)*

By founding the Fort Caroline settlement, France attempted to gain a foothold in a part of the New World previously claimed only by Spain. Eventually, these two European countries would fight for permanent control of Florida.

By the 1560s, Spain had claimed Florida but was focusing its economic energy on Central and South America, sending ships filled with valuable goods back to Europe along the **Gulf Stream**, which sped them along the eastern coastline of Florida. At the same time, France was going through a time of religious civil war between the Protestants, known as the **Huguenots**, and the Roman Catholics. Florida became the ideal opportunity to reunite the people of France in two ways: giving the Huguenots a place to settle where they could worship freely and building a base from which to attack the Spanish ships traveling along the Florida coast on their way back to Spain.

In 1562, **Jean Ribault** was sent by France to explore the New World, and on May 1 his ships entered the **River of May**, now known as the St. Johns River. His men erected a column near the river's mouth claiming Florida for France. In 1564, when the French civil war subsided, three vessels left France under the leadership of **Rene de Laudonniere** to settle in northeast Florida.

The ships arrived at the River of May in June, where they were welcomed by the native population, the Timucuan. A triangular fort was constructed near the river shore and small thatch buildings were constructed to house the settlers. The area was named "la Caroline" in honor of France's 14 year-old king, Charles IX.

Life in the colony turned out to be difficult. The French colonists were unskilled in growing crops or gathering their own food and instead relied upon the Timucua. The climate was very different from that of France and the colonists began to suffer from disease and starvation. The people began to complain and

some even mutinied, stealing a vessel and sailing south. However, much to the colonists' relief, Jean Ribault returned to Florida in September 1565 with more soldiers, settlers, and much needed supplies.

It wasn't long before Spain reacted to the French presence in Florida. **Pedro Menendez de Aviles** received orders to drive the French out of Florida. He scouted the mouth of the River of May, attempting to capture French ships. When that failed he sailed south and established St. Augustine as his base. Ribault tried to sail after the Spanish, but a large storm drove his ships too far south. Menendez decided to take advantage of Ribault's troubles and marched 500 men overland towards Fort Caroline.

Since the French fleet had gone south to try to attack the Spanish, la Caroline was only left with a few able-bodied soldiers. Due to poor weather, the captain sent his guards to their houses, leaving the fort defenseless. Very early that next morning, September 20, 1565, the Spanish attacked. When the Spanish burst into the fort, Laudonniere and his men fought as hard as they could but were overwhelmed. The battle only took one hour. Over 140 Frenchmen had been killed, the women and children spared at Menendez' orders. The fort was renamed San Mateo and some Spanish soldiers remained behind while the Spanish and their prisoners returned to St. Augustine.

A few days later Menendez found the survivors of the French fleet, which was destroyed by that storm. Five hundred soldiers and sailors, helpless and hungry, were trapped at an inlet. Approximately 350 surrendered to the Spanish and the rest escaped into the woods. Menendez knew it would be difficult to guard and feed this many prisoners. For this reason, and because he viewed the French Huguenots as heretics (a group that opposes the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church), 334 of these Huguenots were executed, including Jean Ribault. The **massacre** site still bears the name Matanzas, which means "slaughters." Soon after, France abandoned its interests in Florida, leaving the land in Spanish hands.

The group most affected by French and Spanish influence were the native Timucua. As a result of their contact with the Europeans, thousands of Timucua died of disease. The Spanish mission system also changed Timucua society through the introduction of Christianity. This combination of the decrease in Timucua population and irreversible changes in culture resulted in the break down of their traditional society. Within 200 years of the French arrival and Spain's reassertion of claim to Florida, no true Timucua society remained in northeast Florida.

## **SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR EDUCATIONAL GROUPS**

The next few pages contain some suggested stops, questions, and activities for educational groups touring Fort Caroline National Memorial. If your group is larger than 30 individuals, we suggest that the group be divided and half tour the Visitor Center while the other half explores the fort exhibit and nature trail. After approximately 40 minutes the groups can switch places. There is **always** someone in the Visitor Center that can answer your group's questions.

### **Museum/Visitor Center**

This building contains exhibits and objects that remind us of the natural and cultural resources present in the Timucuan Preserve. As with the French colony of La Caroline or the Timucuans, only memories or items remain of these people and events. The items on display in the Visitor Center help keep alive the past, remind us of our role in the present, and hopefully make us envision our effect on the future!

**Stop 1: *Where the Waters Meet*** - this exhibit is representative of the area in which the Atlantic Ocean meets the St. Johns River. Have your group look at all of the life in our waterways. Find out which fish are familiar to your students. Then ask what in the picture should not be there. Brainstorm ways that your group can help protect our environment.

**Stop 2: *The Salt Marsh*** - the majority of the Timucuan Preserve is made up of wetlands. The salt marsh exhibit shows how all life in the water and on land is interconnected. Remember the food chain? The small organisms in the magnifying glass (*press the light button*) are eaten by small fish and animals in the



marsh, the small fish are eaten by bigger fish, the bigger fish by larger animals like raccoons, birds like ospreys, and by people. Since we are all connected, it is really important to have a healthy marsh. Is eating food from a healthy environment important to you?

**Stop 3: *Nature's Workshop*** - just about everything you see in this exhibit you will see on your walk to the fort exhibit, around the nature trail, or you can find it locally. Everything the Timucua needed had to be found in their environment, and when the French came they had to learn the same things. You would have to learn how to make baskets and nets, too! There were no grocery or hardware stores; you had to find the materials to make everything you needed for your daily life.

**Stop 4: *Worlds Apart*** - look at the map in the case. Compare that map of the world to the one you see in your school textbooks. Do they look the same? This is how the Europeans in the 1400s and 1500s thought the world looked. That is why we say these early explorers made *voyages of discovery*. No one really knew what the world looked like until people set forth to explore it.

**Stop 5: *First Encounters*** - on your right you see a life-sized image of a Frenchman and a Timucua Indian meeting for the very first time. These two people did not speak the same language and were from totally different cultures from different parts of the world. How would you communicate with someone from an entirely different world, who does not speak your language, and what would you try to say to that person?

Look at the images you see along the wall. These engravings were created from drawings made by Jacques le Moyne, an artist who came on the French voyage that built *la Caroline*. These images were like photographs, providing Europeans with their first glimpse of the New World. Some things might not have been drawn realistically. Can you find a picture that looks almost unreal? (perhaps the alligator hunt?)

**Stop 6: *Timeline of Florida History*** - four countries have had a great influence on Florida. Look at the flags and see if you can figure out which countries were here. (*in order of appearance - France, Spain, England, United States*) Before the flags you see a different symbol, who does that represent? (*Timucua Indians*) What country has controlled Florida for the longest period of time? (*Spain - not until the year 2055 will the United States have controlled Florida as long as Spain has*)

**Stop 7: *Living Laboratory*** - this dark room is really important to our lives today. Each photo represents something that goes on daily in the Jacksonville area. Birds still raise their young, manatees can still be seen in the river, people drive to and

from work, and fishing boats go out and collect fish. What do you think the mirror is for? It shows *you* as part of our community. You have the responsibility and the choice to make northeast Florida a healthy place for people and animals to live and grow. That is a very important reason for your visit today.

### **River Overlook** (behind visitor center)

What river is this? (*St. Johns River*) The French gave it a different name when they came to explore and claim this area for France, and the Timucua probably had their own name for the river. The French arrived here on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May in 1562 and called this the *River of May*. Today the St. Johns is a busy area. When you look across the river to the west (left) you see Blount Island where ships on-load and off-load supplies and the Jacksonville Electric Authority steam towers; straight across you see homes, and to the east (right), if the trees were not blocking the view, you would see Mayport.

Notice how we are not at river level. To the east is the apex of St. Johns Bluff, of which we are on the western part. When the French chose this area for Fort Caroline, the Bluff was part of the reason since it offers a great view of the area. If you have time, the Ribault Monument is only ½ mile up the road and is situated atop the highest point of St. Johns Bluff and commemorates France's claim to Florida.

The river has been used for many things in the past and present. You can see people having fun boating, some out fishing (either for work or pleasure), and there are large ships using the river as a highway from the ocean to the port. People have also used the river in a negative way - as a big trash dump. This is something you can help prevent, just placing your trash in the cans provided makes a big difference!

### **Timucua Hut**

This is an example of a Timucua dwelling or shelter. Is it different from where you live? When you look at the hut you can see things from the environment that were used in its construction. Try and list a few things. (*grape vines, palm fronds, sticks or wood from trees*) The Timucua knew a lot about their environment. When the French arrived in the 1560s, the Timucua had already been living in the area for thousands of years!

As you continue your walk along the trail towards the fort exhibit, see if you can come up with some ideas on what you would make from natural materials to help you in your daily life. If you were here 440 years ago, you would have no choice but to learn how to survive in woods like these.

## **Fort Exhibit - Outside**

Before we go inside the fort, let's make a few observations. What is the shape of the fort? (*triangle*) What is the fort made out of? (*wood and sod*) Where did the supplies to construct the fort come from? (*the local environment*)

When the French arrived they made friends with the Timucua and borrowed a lot of ideas from them. If you were new to this area, would you copy some of the ideas from a group of people (the Timucua) who had lived here successfully for thousands of years?

Not everyone would have lived inside the fort. After you got off the ship, you would have been told to find food and make a temporary home so that work on the fort could begin immediately. The fort was a place of protection, but homes and maybe even gardens would have been outside of the fort in an area like where you are now standing. That is one reason why the bake oven is outside the fort exhibit, to symbolize that a lot of daily activities occurred outside the fort.

## **Fort Exhibit - Inside**

Now that you are inside the fort you might feel that it seems small. This fort is a model of the French fort built in the 1560s, but this time it was built much smaller than the original. The plans for the fort were taken from the drawings made by the artist who accompanied the French. His drawings showed that there were a few buildings inside the fort, but most of the homes were outside.

This fort is here to help us remember the French colonists who were here and who died in battle against the Spanish. Spain had claimed Florida prior to the French expeditions. Florida was very important for the protection of Spanish trade routes returning from Central America back to Europe along the Gulf Stream. However, that is only one reason why the Spanish wanted the French to leave.

Another reason for the Spanish dislike of the French was that they were of a different religion. The Spanish were Catholic and some of the French were Huguenots (Protestant). Some of the French had come here because of religious wars in France between French Catholics and French Huguenots. Here in Florida these settlers from all walks of life were going to start a new colony and a new life where they could worship in peace. Can you think of another story in history that sounds similar?

The French were only in Florida for fifteen months, but their search for personal freedom is one that is repeated throughout history. This park was created to keep

their memory alive. Thank you for wanting to learn about our northeast Florida history!

### **Hammock Nature Trail**

The nature trail is a 1.0-mile self-guiding loop. There are interpretive signs along the way to help your group recognize the rich resources that Florida had to offer in the past and the present. Your group might want to try the scavenger hunt checklist on the next page for a fun and informative walk!

### **Other Areas of the Timucuan Preserve to Take Your Group!**

*Inquire inside the Visitor Center for more details!*

**Theodore Roosevelt Area** – 5 miles of hiking trails along Timucuan middens with a nature observation tower at Round Marsh

**Kingsley Plantation** – 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century plantation on Fort George Island at the mouth of the St. Johns River

**Cedar Point** – hiking trails on Black Hammock Island

**Talbot Islands State Park** – nature trails and pristine beaches

### **Discussion Questions**

1. The Visitor Center exhibits explain that different cultures living in northeast Florida through time interacted with their natural environment. Can you think of ways that you are linked to the natural world or ways in which you use things from the environment in your daily life?
2. Can you think of other places in Jacksonville that are named after some of the people that came to northeast Florida in the 1500s?
3. The self-guided walk you took to the fort exhibit discussed the main reasons why the French came to Florida – for God (religious freedom), gold (or quick wealth), and country (France's place in the New World). The first reason, religion, was involved because there had been religious wars in France. Can you think of somewhere in the world today where there still are religious wars occurring?
4. The Timucuan Preserve is made up of national parks, state parks, city parks, and private property. Can you explain how this partnership in Jacksonville will help take care of our special natural areas?

## Fort Caroline Nature Hunt Checklist

You find the item along the Hammock Trail and fill in the blanks. The first one is done for you. Don't forget to check things off!  
The last box is empty for you to write your own discovery.

✓	Item	Location
✓	<i>Bald eagle</i>	<i>Flying over St. Johns River</i>
	Muscadine grape vine	
	Resurrection fern	
	Pine tree	
	Lichen	
	Spanish moss	
	Yaupon holly	
	Live Oak	
	Wax Myrtle	
	Sabal palm	
	Saw palmetto	
	Gray squirrel	

### Remember:

**Leave only footprints and take only memories!**  
**This list is only for what you saw and thought.**

***Ribault's First Expedition***

Ribault leaves le Havre \_\_\_\_\_ 18 Feb. **1562**  
Ribault reaches the FL coast \_\_\_\_\_ 30 April  
He finds entrance of River of May \_\_\_\_ 1 May  
Ribault's book on FL is published \_\_\_\_\_  
in England \_\_\_\_\_ May **1563**

***Laudonniere's Expedition***

Laudonniere leaves le Havre \_\_\_\_ 22 Apr. **1564**  
He arrives off the coast of FL \_\_\_\_\_ 22 June  
He reaches River of May \_\_\_\_\_ 25 June  
He meets Saturiwa (Chief) \_\_\_\_\_ 25 June  
Founding of la Caroline \_\_\_\_\_ 30 June  
Thirteen men desert the colony \_\_\_\_ 13 Nov.  
Famine at la Caroline \_\_\_\_\_ May-June  
**1565**

***Ribault's Second Expedition***

Menendez assigned to \_\_\_\_\_  
conquer Florida \_\_\_\_\_ 22 Mar. **1565**  
Ribault leaves France \_\_\_\_\_ 26 May  
Ribault reaches Florida coast \_\_\_\_\_ 14 Aug  
Menendez leaves Puerto Rico \_\_\_\_\_  
with 5 vessels \_\_\_\_\_ 15 Aug.  
Menendez in sight of FL \_\_\_\_\_ 25 Aug.  
Ribault lands with reinforcements \_\_\_\_ 28 Aug.  
Menendez discovers Ribault's ships \_\_\_\_ 4 Sept.  
Menendez moves south and \_\_\_\_\_  
establishes St. Augustine \_\_\_\_\_ 8 Sept.  
Ribault's fleet sets out and destroyed \_\_\_\_\_  
by storms \_\_\_\_\_ 10-23 Sept.  
Menendez begins march \_\_\_\_\_  
on Fort Caroline \_\_\_\_\_ 17 Sept.  
Spanish capture Fort Caroline \_\_\_\_\_ 20 Sept.  
Two ships leave for France \_\_\_\_\_ 25 Sept.  
First massacre \_\_\_\_\_ 29 Sept.  
Menendez hears of Ribault's \_\_\_\_\_  
shipwreck \_\_\_\_\_ 10 Oct.  
Second massacre, Ribault slain \_\_\_\_\_ 12 Oct.  
Laudonniere arrives in England \_\_\_\_ 15 Nov.

***De Gourgues' Expedition***

De Gourges departs \_\_\_\_\_ 22 Aug. **1567**  
He lands in Florida \_\_\_\_\_ April **1568**  
He takes the 2 Spanish forts \_\_\_\_\_ 24 April  
Captures Fort San Mateo \_\_\_\_\_  
(Fort Caroline) \_\_\_\_\_ 27 April  
Massacre of the Spaniards \_\_\_\_\_ 27-28 April  
De Gourgues leaves Florida \_\_\_\_\_ 3 May

## SUGGESTED READING LIST

### For Adults:

Bennett, Charles, *Fort Caroline and Its Leader*, University Press of Florida, 1976.  
Reprinted by Eastern National, 1996.

Judge, Joseph, "Exploring Our Forgotten Century," *National Geographic*, March 1988.

Lyon, Eugene, *Enterprise of Florida*, University of Florida Press, 1976.

Milanich, Jerald, *Florida Indians and the Invasion from Europe*, University of Florida Press, 1995.

Myers, Ronald L. and John J. Ewel, *Ecosystems of Florida*, University of Central Florida Press, 1990.

Waterbury, Jean P., *St. Augustine: Saga of Survival*, St. Augustine Historical Society, 1982.

### For Kids:

Weitzel, Kelley G., *The Timucua Indians: a Native American Detective Story*, University Press of Florida, 2000.

Richard L. Ruehrwein, compiler, *Discover Florida in the New World*, Creative Company, 1997.